MPA-016: DECENTRALISATION AND LOCAL GOVERNANCE
Assignment (TMA)

Course Code: MPA-016
Assignment Code: MPA-016/Asst/TMA/July 2021- January 2022
Marks: 100

This Assignment consists of Section- I and Section- II. There are five questions in each Section. You have to answer a total of five questions in about 500 words each. It is necessary to attempt at least two questions from each section. Each question carries 20 marks.

SECTION-I

1) Discuss the evolution and significance of democratic decentralisation in India. 20

2) Explain the concept of empowerment by highlighting the problems in achieving empowerment. 20

3) Describe the politico-administrative components of decentralisation and suggest necessary measures to strengthen them. 20

4) Examine the partnership among local authorities and special purpose agencies in the health sector. 20

5) "Owing to the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992, municipalities are functioning as effective institutions of local self-governance at the grassroots level". Comment. 20

SECTION-II

6) Discuss the impact of decentralised development. 20

7) Explain the term institutional capacity building and suggest ways for capacity building of elected representatives. 20

8) What are the different requirements in development planning? 20

9) Examine the structure, powers and functions of local government. 20

10) Write short notes on the following in 250 words each:

   a) Modalities for people's participation. 10

   b) Sustainable development and governance. 10

ASSIGNMENT SOLUTIONS SAMPLE(2021-2022)

MPA-16

Decentralisation and Local Governance

Disclaimer/Special Note: These are just the sample of the Answers /Solu tions to some of the Questions given in the Assignments. These Sample Answers /Solu tions are prepared by Private Teacher/Tutors/Authors for the help and guidance of the student to get an idea of how he/she can answer the Questions given the Assignments. We do not claim 100% accuracy of these sample answers as these are based on the knowledge and capability of Private Teacher /Tutor. Sample answers may be seen as the Guide/Help for the reference to prepare the answers of the Questions given in the assignment. As these solutions and answers are prepared by the private Teacher/Tutor so the chances of error or mistake cannot be denied. Any Omission or Error is highly regretted though every care has been taken while preparing these Sample Answers/Solutions. Please consult your own Teacher/Tutor before you prepare a Particular Answer and for up-to-date and exact in formation, data and solu tion. Student should must read and refer the official study material provided by the university.

SECTION-I

Q. 1. Discuss the evolution and significance of democratic decentralisation in India.

Ans. Evolution of Democratic Decentralization: The industrial revolution in England in the 19th century and its spread to continental Europe and the Americas paved the way for the emergence of conventional or received paradigms of modern development.

With this , these countries saw the end of the empire and the rise of an era of Independence and self-rule. However, even after Independence , by and la rge, they also followed the received paradigms of development originated with the industrial revolution , the basic focus of which was on 'growth at any cost' . This was mostly because of their colonial legacy and colonized minds. The state and the market were considered to be the two dominant institutions in the economy playing the development role. In fact, the forces of empire reemerged in these countries in the form of development, with a strong, but false promise, to bring prosperity to all. Development that occurred in these countries, however, betrayed the common people and totally failed in keeping up the promises. The ill usion created among the people that economic growth would bring progress, benefit the people and increase the well-being of all has disappeared. The increasing global inequality in the second half of 20th century is obvious from the facts that the world's richest 1% of people receive as much income as the poorest 57%, the income of the world 's richest 5% is 114 time that of the poorest 55 and the richest 10% of the U.S. population has an income equal to that of the poorest 43% of the world.

Development , according to traditional economic theories , emerged after the industrial revolution and was reckoned as mere growth of income or Gross Domestic Product of the country. The debate remained to be one about 'growth'

versus ' non-g rowth' . The argument was that growth is imperative for the alleviation of poverty and the well-being of the society, as growth would percolate down to all sections of the society. When the countries under colonial rule became independent , they also took it for granted that the post-industrial revolution development model would ensure growth of their economies and that all sections of the people would benefit out of such a growth. More than half a decade of experiment with these development paradigms in these countries, however, did not guarantee any promising future for the vast majority of their people. The development discontent in these developing countries precipitated during these decades and a search for alternative development paradigms and strategies for development received top priority among the politic ians, academics and policymakers. ' ParticipatoryDevelopment' is the most vehemently suggested alternative paradigm.

Village panchayats have been an integral part of village administration since times immemorial but nothing much is known about the status, structure, functions and finances of panchayats in ancient Ind ia. Although the idea of decentralised planning is as old as the Gandhian economic thought, attempts at giving a concrete shape to this thinking may be said to have been made in the post-independence period. During the Constitution making process and thereafter, since the inception of planning in India, certain hard choices had to be made between the needs of national security, national unity and economic growth, on the one hand, and the consideration of achieving a measure of distributive justice, on the other, so that the benefits of development accrue to the people at the grassroot level, and also people may participate in the process of planning and development at different territorial levels. In the initial years, the choice was made in favour of rapid growth and planning and, therefore, decision-making remained centralised and vertical around the two political levels, *viz.,* the Union and the State. Local bodies like panchayats, by and large, functioned as civic agencies of the State Government and not as instruments of micro-level planning. In India, the decentralized bodies existing below the state (a three tiered system at the district , block and village level) are known as "Panchayat Raj Institutions' (PRI) and they have been granted constitutional status under the law vide the 73rd Amendment.

It was during the third five year plan that a methodology of preparing state plans for rural development on the basis of district and block plans, was evolved and attempts were made to constitute three-tier system of PRIs, based on the recommendations of the Balwant Rai Mehta Committee (1957), and with it the idea of "planning from below" gained some currency. But these ideas did not pick up and were not operationalized, as the PRis, except in some states, were stagnating or declining, after the initial enthusiasm for their development. Lot of discussion had taken place in the country in respect of the need for creating multi-level planning framework whkh envisaged devolution of definite powers, functions and finances to different territorial levels , but no concrete steps were taken in this direction .

Since the beginning of the sixth five year plan, a number of special programmes for poverty alleviation, employment generation and area development were launched in the country. At this stage, block level was considered important to implement rural development programmes through fuller utilization of local resources. In November 1977, a Working Group under the Chairmanship of Prof. M.L. Dantwala was appointed by the Government ofl ndia, to draw up guidelines for block level planning.

At the same time, in December, 1977, a Committee on Panchayati Raj, headed by Ashok Mehta was appointed. The Committee considered inadequacy of resources, mainly responsible for failure of PRIs and, therefore, recommended,

inter alia, measures for strengthening the financial resources of PRis. In the light of recommendations of the Committee, gradually PRIs were set-up in almost all the states and were contemplated to be developed as instruments of development. Whereas in Maharashtra and Guja rat, power was vested in district panchayats, in Madhya Pradesh and some other states, the responsibility for development was entrusted to development blocks. Another committee headed by Prof. C.H. Hanumantha Rao (1984) went into the question of evolving methodology for district level planning and recommended that planning process at the district level should be sufficiently decent ralized, having a good deal of autonomy, administrative and technical capability and financial adequacy.

SIGNIFICANCE OF DEMOCRATIC DECENTRALIZATION

Democratic decentralization is the process of devolving the functions and resources of the state from the centre to the elected representatives at the lower levels so as to facilitate greater direct participation by the citizens in governance. The basic principle governing the devolution offunctions and resources should be that of subsidiarity: what can be done best at a particular level should be done at that level and not at higher-levels. All that can optimally done at the lowest level should be reserved to that level. Only the residual should be passed to the higher-levels. The different tiers while functioning in ways complementary to each other, should have functional, financial and administrative autonomy. The concept of democratic decentralization proposed here also requires a movement beyond representative democracy. Appropriate institutions and opportunities but also necessary capabilities have to be created at the lower levels in order for ordinary citizens to participate in the decision-making , im plementation, monitoring and sharing of the benefits and responsibilities of governmental activities. Such popular participation would make the elected representatives continuously accountable to the citizens and would facilitate a transparent administration.

Alongwith downsizing governments, decentralizingtheir authority is being advocated as part of the good governance agenda promoted by bilateral and multilateral funding agencies. Deconcentrating Central Government offices by locating them closer to where citizens live constitutes one part of decentralization; but the more important part concerns devolution or mandated transfers of authority and resources to independently elected local governments.

Q. 2. Explain the concept of empowerment by highlighting the problems in achieving empowerment.

Ans. Empowerment refers to increasing the spiritual, political, social, or economic strength of individuals and communities. It often involves the empowered developing confidence in their own capacities. "Marginalized" refers to the overt or covert trends within societies whereby those perceived as lacking desirable traits or deviating from the group nmms tend to be excluded by wider society and ostracized as undesirables. Sometimes, groups are marginalized by society at large, but governments are often unwitting or enthusiastic participants. For example, the U.S. government marginalized cultural minorities, particularly blacks , prior to the Civil Rights Act of 1964. This Act made it illegal to restrict access to schools and public places based on race. Equal opportunity laws which actively oppose such margin ali zation, allow increased empowerment to occur. They are also a symptom of minor ities ' and women's empowerment through lobbying.

Marginalized people who have no opportunities for self-sufficiency become, at a minimum, dependent on charity or welfare. They lose their self-confidence because they cannot be fully self-supporting. The opportunities denied them also deprive them of the pride of accomplishment which others, who have those opportunities, can develop for themselves. This in turn can lead to psychological, social and even mental health problems. Empowerment is then the

process of obtaining these basic opportunities for marginalized people, either directly by those people, or through the help of non-marginalized others who share their own access to these opportunities.It also includes actively thwarting attempts to deny those opportunities. Empowerment also includes encouraging and developing the skills for, self-sufficiency, with a focus on eliminating the future need for charity or welfare in the individuals of the group. This process can be difficult to start and to implement effectively, but there are many examples of empowerment projects which have succeeded.

One empowerment strategy is to assist marginalized people to create their own nonprofit organization, using the rationale that only the marginalized people, themselves , can know what their own people need most, and that control of the organization by outsiders can actually help to further entrench marginalization. Charitable organizations lead from outside of the community, for example , can disempower the community by entrenching a dependence on charity or welfare. A nonprofit organization can target strategies that cause structural changes, reducing the need for ongoing dependence. Red Cross, for example , can focus on improving the health of indigenous people, but does not have authority in its charter to install water-delivery and purification systems, even though the lack of such a system profoundly, directly and negatively impacts health. A nonprofit composed of the indigenous people, however, could insure their own organization does have such authority and could set their own agendas, make their own plans, seek the needed resources, do as much of the work as they can, and take responsibility-and credit-for the success of their projects (or the conseque nces, should they fail).

Numerous critical perspectives exist that propose that an empowerment paradigm is present, Clark showed that whilst there was a degree of autonomy provided by empowerment , it also made way for extended surveillance and control , hence the contradiction perspective .

EMPOWERMENT: PROBLEMS AND CONSTRAINTS

The 73rd Amendment , which is based on one of the major directive principles of the State policy enshrined in the Article 40 of the Constitution "the States shall take steps to organise panchayats and vest them with such powers and authority as may be neces sary to enable them to function as units of self-government"; the spirit behind this measure is to instal effective institutions of self-government at the local level. Article 243(g) widely empowers these bodies to enjoy devolution of powers and responsibilities with regard to *(a)* preparation of plans for economic development and social justice *(b)* implementation of schemes for the above relating to matters listed in the 11th Schedule. The implicit requirement is that most of the functions /activities now being performed by the State Government agencies at the local level have to be withdrawn from them and handed over to the panchayats together with functional autonomy and adequate resources in discharging those activities. But, in most of the states this has not happened. Often, there is a tendency to look at panchayats as another extension of the field machiner y of the State Government.

Urban local bodies /municipalities play an important role in the planning and development of urban areas. However, most studie s undertaken to assess the functioning of municipalities in India point out that the performance of municipalities in the dis charge of their duties has continued to deteriorate over time. It is noted that municipalities in India are confronted with a number of problems, such as inefficiency in the conduct of business, ineffective participation by the weaker sections of the population in local governance , weak financial condition, lack of transparency in the planning and implementation of projects, etc., which affect their performance adversely. It is also learnt that the

municipalities are confronted with a number of problems, despite the amendments in the State Municipal Acts and the implementation of the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act provisions. For inst ance, in several States, there exists a problem of ineffective participation in the decision-making process despite adoption of the policy ofreservation, delays in the transfer offunds to the municipalities despite constitution of State Finance Commissions, poor recovery from various tax and non-tax sources despite devolution of powers, etc. It is further learnt that there is an influence of various social, economic and political factors on the functioning of municipalities in India. Considering these local-level issues of governance as relev ant, it is essential to examine the impact of the Constitution (74th Amendment) Act in different states of India.

In this study, the impact of the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act is assessed for a total of twenty-seven States and one Union Territory (UT) oflndia. The state of Jammu and Kashmir was not included in the study. The National Capital Territory of Delhi, which is classified as a Union Territory by the 2001 Census ofl ndia, has been covered in this study. The main problem faced in assessing the impact of the 74th Amendment Act was the non-availability of data on some aspects of the 74th Amendment Act provisions. This problem was noted especially in the case of most north-eastern states and the newly created states ofChhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Uttarakhand. There are a number of states where desegregated data on the number of male and female councilo rs/chair persons belonging to SC, ST, BC and general category are not maintained properly. Similarly, adequate information is not maintained on the devolution offunctional responsibilities and financial powers to ULBs.

Q. 4. Examine the partnership among local authorities and special purpose agencies in the health sector.

Ans. Partnership Among Local Authorities and Special Purpose Agencies in Health Sector: In India, one of the main areas for the social development programmes has been the improvement in the health status of the population. Accordingl y, the access to and utilisation of health services was improved with special focus on the underserved and the underprivileged sectio ns. Now, there is a vast health infrastructure and manpower at prim ary, secondary and tertiary care in government, voluntary and private sectors in India. Moreover, technological advances have resulted in substantial improvement in health indices of the population and a steep decline in mortality. However, the extent of access to and utilisation of health care varied substantially between states, districts and different sections of the populace.

The mortality rates remained stable during the 1990s and the country entered a period of dual disease burden of combating communicable diseases which have become more difficult to deal with because of insecticide resistance among vectors , resistance to antibiotics in many bacteria and emergence of new diseases such as HIV and increasing longevity and the changes in life style which have resulted in the increasing prevalence of non-communicable diseases. Thus, larger investments and technological advances along with greater access to health are needed.

Current Problems

- The infrastructure functioning at sub-optimal level and poor referral serv ices.
- The spectrum of possible interventions widened by technological advances.
- Gaps in manpower and infrastructure in government sector persists.
- Awareness and expectations related to health care services is increasing among the people.

- Most of hospitals in government, voluntary and private sector do not have appropriate manpower , diagnostic and therapeutic services as well as drugs.
- Ever increasing costs of health care.

Due to the above proble ms, the Ninth Plan called upon the following:

- To review the changes in the health scenario and assessing the response of the public, voluntary and private sector health care providers as well as the population.
- To introduce health system reforms to enable the people to obtain essential health care at affordable cost and to ensure access to public health programmes free of cost to all.
- To reorganise health systems making them effective and efficient.

National Health Policy, 2002

A comprehensive framework for plannin g, implementation monitoring of health services was provided by the National Health Policy (NHP), 1983. This aim was to be achieved by 2000. After a review of the performance since 1983, the Department of Health formulated the NHP, 2002. The emphasis of the new policy was that any significant improvement in the quality of health services and health status of the citizens, would depend on increased financial and material inputs, service providers treating their responsibility not as a commercial activity, but as a service (albeit a paid one), the citizens demanding improvement in the quality of services, a responsive health delivery system, and improved governance. This policy also attempts to make choices between various schemes. With effective implementation of policies and strategies indicated in the Tenth Plan and NHP 2002, it is believed that the country will achieve goals set for next two decades.

Privatization of Health Services

The increasing share of 'for profit ' health care and its marketisation across societies in health care sector has gone side by side with the process of economic glo balization. This commercialization , corporatization and marketisation of health care are a phenomenon of the last quarter of the 20th century. Multilateral agencies have an influential role in shaping national policies which comes in handy with the multinational corporations who systematically target them for policy influence and defining priorities in health care programmes. MNCs, for example, have influential national policies in key areas through multilateral agencies such as the World Bank, World Health Organization and World Trade Organization. When India gained independence , there was a significant presence of the private sector at that time. According to the Bhore Committee, the proportion of allopathic doctors in private practice was 73 percent and the remaining 27 percent were in government service. However, the proportion of private nursing homes and hospitals was insignificant although these institutions started growing during the 1970s. Moreover, the cutback in public spending and government subsidies has resulted in the growth of the private sector at secondary and tertiary levels of health care. For instance, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Kera la, Punj ab, Haryana and Gujarat show these trends. However, most other states such as Rajasthan, Bih ar, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal and Orissa could not register private sector growth.

Need for Paradigm Shift

To ensure quality in providing public services, the partnership ofLocal Authorities and Special Purpose Agencies has evolved. They pool public and private resources, and capitalise on the skills of the health care sector to improve

the delivery of services. Their partnership in the health sector focus on preventing diseases , developing and facilitating access to vaccines and drugs, etc.

Health Care Use: Local Authorities-Special Purpose Agencies Mix

The private health care sector can be highly inelastic in the absence of a functioning public system as a base. Therefore, it must be noted that public services play a crucial role in the health of the poor and particularly for poor women. The public health system which functions properly, not only assures effective services to those at the lower ends of the socio-economic hierarchy, but can also set ceiling for prices and a norm for quality in the private sector of country. For example, according to a study in seven sub-Sahara African countries , although curative health spending was not well targeted, it was still progressive.

WHO: Public-Private Health Partnerships

For the implementation of national strategies for health for all, the World Health Assembly urged upon WHO in 1993 to mobilise the support of all partners in health development , including NGOs and private sector institutions.

Moreover, for achieving a health-creatinggoal on the basis of mutually agreed and explicitly defined division of labour, WHO participates in a number of global public-private partnerships which transcends national boundaries.

SECTION-II

Q. 6. Discuss the impact of decentralised development.

Ans. Impact of Decentralized Development: The trend toward greater decentralization in India was reinforced in 1992 by the passage of the 73rd and 74thAmendments, which offered constitutional recognition to local governments. Decentralization is the transfer of political , administrative and fiscal responsibilities to locally elected bodies in urban and rural areas, and the empowerment of communities to exert control over these bodies. In India, locally elected bodies are the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) at the dist ric t, block and village levels. The decentralization process is distinct for urban and rural areas. The 73rd amendment governs rural decentralization, whereas the 74th amendment mandates urban decentralization. Rules and institutions are different between the two. The system of the hierarchically three-layered rural government is clearly differentiated from local governments in urban areas, which are more autonomous in nature. While the PRis have hitherto been attached to the state administration, the municipal authorities are disjoined and have had fiscal powers to raise resources for their additional fiscal requirements. In general, there are lesser expenditure responsibilities for rural than urban governments. Another important difference is that the area and population under the jurisdiction of different urban bodies is different.

The new architecture of governance has to be built on the basis of devolution of authority, responsibility and resources to appropriate levels. If corresponding dispersion of resources and personnel is not accompanied with devolution of authority it perpetuates mentality of dependency. Resources do not mean only financial resources. Human resources are as important. Experience shows that monitored and supervised by the local author ities, who are also their employers, the professionals at the district and local levels have performed better. If a primary school teacher looks to a distant education director for his promotion or any other improvement in his conditions of service, he is not going to be accountable and responsive to the needs of the local community he is supposed to serve. This simple example brings to the fore the question of the present structure of social and economic services and how it needs to be remodelled or refashioned to bring it in line with the requirements of the age of decentralization. There

is no reason why the District Councils cannot recruit, train, manage cadres of school teachers , supervisors, administrators for primary and secondary education leaving the areas of high speciality to professionals like curriculum developers. Coordination functions can be handled by regional or state level bodies. Similar logic can be applied in regard to other services which are needed at the district levels and it can be extended upwards to the State level. Participation of women and members of SC/ST communities in Gram Sabhas (village councils) and Panchayat meetings is favoured to ensure representation of interests of the poor. The 73rd and 74th Amendments envisage the village panchayat/ ward council as a forum and action point where local solutions to local problems will remedy lacunae in bureaucratic, top-down schemes. Although national goals and aspirations are supportive of decentralization, during its implementation we need to address concerns for inclusiveness, accountability and effectiveness. For realizing the progressive intent of national policy, elected local government institutions must be helped to become vehicles for social transformation, articulating the felt needs of the community, especially those of women and marginalised groups. Livelihood security for the poor would ensure effective participation and better mobilization of local resources.

Political Decentralization

Political Decentralization provides a more durable ' rational-le gal' framework that makes Decentralization an integral part of the political and civic discourse. India is the world leader in creating space for political decentralization. Political decentralization aims to give citizens or their elected representatives more power in public decision-making. It is often associated with pluralistic politics and representative government, but it can also support democratization by giving citizens, or their representatives, more influence in the formulation and implementationof policies. Advocates of political decentralization assume that decisions made with greater participation will be better informed and more relevant to diverse interests in society than those made only by national political authorities. The concept implies that the selection of representatives from local electoral jurisdictions allows citizens to know better their political representatives and allows elected officials to know better the needs and desires of their constituents.

Political decentralization often requires constitutional or statutory reforms, the development of pluralistic political parties , the strengthening oflegislatures, creation oflocal political units, and the encouragement of effective public interest groups.

Elections: The mode of election of the Chairperson (variously called *Sarpanch, Pradhan* or *Mukhiya)* at the village panchayat level is determined by the states. Thus, many states-including Bihar, Gujarat, Goa, Madhya Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana and Punjab-have provided for direct election of the Chairperson at this level. In Himachal Pradesh, the *"Up-Pradhan"* (or deputy Chairperson) is also directly elected. The remaining states provide for indirect election, with the Chairperson being elected by the directly elected members of the body from among themselves. The office of the Chairperson is also subject to provisions ofreservation for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (in proportion to their population) and women (not less than one-third). Arunachal Pradesh provides reservation to women alone. In Uttar Pradesh, reservation for women in Chairpersonships is subject to the condition that it should not exceed 27 percent of the total number of offices of *Pradhans.* In other states, it varies from one-tenth in Gujarat and one-third in A.P. and Karnataka, to 25 percent in *Madhya* Pradesh and 27 per cent in Maharashtra.

Reservation: Reservation for the backward classes , though dis cretio nary, is provided for by Bihar, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat , Haryana, Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab and Goa. There are also variations in the percentage of seats reserved for the backward classes: One-tenth in Gujarat, one-third in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka, and 27 per cent in Maharashtra. In Madhya Pradesh, where 50 per cent or less of the seats are reserved for SC-STs, 25 percent are reserved for Backward Classes. In Punjab, one seat in each Gram Panchayat is reserved for the Backward Classes, if their population is more than 20 percent. In Haryana, one seat is reserved for the Backward Classes, if their population is 2 percent or more of the total population of the Gram Sabha area.

Role of Gram Sabha: As the base of the entire pyramidal structure oflocal government, the Gram Sabha (or village assembly) is the life-blood of local democracy. Though , the Constitution of the Gram Sabha is mandatory, there are variations across states in respect of the required frequency of its meetin gs, as also its powers and functions. Gram Sabhas are required to meet four times a year in Assam and Bihar, three times a year in Tamil Nadu, annually in Tripura, Madhya Pradesh and West Bengal, and twice a year in all the remaining states. Some states-viz. Bihar, Goa, Tripura, Rajasthan and Manipur-have provided for the constitution of Vigilance Committees for each Gram Sabha.

The meetings of the Gram Sabha are chaired by the Pradhan and attended by elected members from different wards and the community at large. These meetings discuss the general problems of community; identify local development needs and aspirations as well as the special problems faced by particular groups. Issues of local public concern are meant to be raised and discussed among citizens in a participatory manner, with the final decision being taken collectively , and documented in the form ofMinutes of Meetings (MoM). The Gram Sabha is thus meant to be the forum in which beneficiaries of various development programmes are identified.It is also the body that audits and approves the accounts of the Gram Panchayat. As such, it is in the Gram Sabha that ordinary citizens can make their representatives accountable and demand transparency in their functioning. In most states, Gram Sabhas take decisions on the basis of the majority of members present and voting. Though all persons registered as voters on the electoral rolls are members of the Gram Sabha, very few states have provided special incentives to encourage the participation of women in this forum.

Role of the Ward Committees: The Municipal Acts of the states under study show that provisions related to the Constitution of WCs have been incorporated. It is also learnt that rules for the constitution, composition and functioning of wards committees have been formed by the state legislatures of Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal. Available data show that WCs have been constituted in a total of8 states and one UT of India. These includeAndhra Pradesh, Chhattis garh, Delhi, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal. Generally, members ofWCs comprise the elected ward representatives (i.e., councillors) and nominated members. In the states ofKarnataka, Kerala, and Maharashtra, a higher level of participation is observed, where members of NGOs, CBOs, neighbourhood groups, heads of educational institutions , persons from agricu lture, industry, health, trade uni ons, etc., have also been associated. On the other hand, the deputy commissioner is the head of the executive wing of the WCs. WCs have been assigned several responsibili ties , such as maintenance of civic services, revenue collection/assistance in tax collection, drafting of annual budget, slum improvement, public grievances, formulation

and execution of development schemes, monitoring the implementation of development programmes, recommendations on proposals regarding estimates of expenditure, granting approval and financial sanction to plans and municipal works , scrutiny of monthly progress report , etc. Some information is available on the functioning of wards committees in different states oflndia. It is learnt that in the southern states, they are functional in Tamil Nadu and in Kerala. In Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka , they are practically not functional except in Hyderabad and in Bengaluru municipal corporations. In the case of Bengaluru, it is further learnt that they are neither meeting regularly, nor working effectively. It may be stated that Kerala is a unique example , where WCs have been constituted in every ward and in towns with a population of more than a lakh. In the case ofChhattisgarh, it is learnt that although WCs have been constituted in Raipur Municipal Corporation, no responsibilities have been assigned to them and no budgetary allocation is being given . In fact, they are completely nonfunctional.

Accountability: In order to establish accountability at the level of local Government and empowerment of the marginalized groups, Indian Parliament passed 73rd and 74th Amendment Acts in 1992 providing for among other things 33.3% reservation for women and for Scheduled Castes/Tribes in proportion to their population, decentralized development planning, enhancing financial abilities through increased financial powers and support to the local bodies.

Decentralization and democratization thus, are made benchmarks of development administration. Moreover, 79 ministries and departments of the Central Government are operating the structure of citizens' charter. This charter is an account of:

- Time limits and standards for services,
- Avenues of grievance redressal, and
- Putting in place monitoring system and independent scrutiny of implementation of the charter.

A number of States and Union Government have created special agencies and units to deal with the grievances of the public emanating mainly from non-reachability of the officials, absence of a time frame for disposal of the cases and unsympathetic attitude of public officials. Accountability is related to the system of openness and transparency. If the decisions are not taken in a transparent and open manner, one can question the impartiality of such a decision. There shall be much less place for favouritism, nepotism and prejudice in the treatment of the citizens. Indian Parliament has enacted the Right to Information Act to facilitate openness in government. Central ministries and departments have set up facilitation counters with wide publicity for the purpose of information and making complaints.

Functional Decentralization

The functioning of the third tier of government depends on the devolution ofr esources, subjects and functionaries to the Panchayats and Municipalities.

Transfer of Functions: With increasing funds being made available to the local self-governments and the slow but gradual transfer of functions to these units, the question of accountability of these institutions has assumed great importance. The need for capacity building in accounts, budgeting, monitoring , etc. becomes all the more critical in this context. In some States, Panchayat Acts have devolved broad functions to PRis, leading to overlap offunctions and ambiguities in the specific role to be played by the different tiers. Union and the State Governments have embarked on detailed 'Activity Mapping', which is the foundation of sound panchayati raj. It involves systematic unbundling of the broad subjects listed in Eleventh Schedule and devolving activities across government tiers using

mainly the principle of subsidiarity which holds that any activity which can be performed at a lower level should be undertaken only at that level and at no higher-level.

Financial Decentralization

Fiscal decentralization refers to the resource reallocation to subnational levels of government Arrangement for resources allocation are often negotiated between the central and local authorities based on several factors included inter regional equity, availability, resources of all levels of government and local fiscal management capacity. Experience in fiscal decentralization has led to capacity building in expenditure and revenue assignment as well as the design of fiscal transfer formulas and sub-national borrowing.

Divestment is when planning and administrative responsibility and other public function are transferred from government to all voluntary, private or non-governmental institution with clear benefits to and involvement of the public. This often involves contracting out partial service privatization or administrative function, deregulation or full privatization.

Devolution of Funds: In keeping with the spirit of the Constitutional amendments and the philosophy of decentralization which recognizes that grassroots level participation and implementation is the very essence of good governance , local bodies are being increasingly invested with responsibility of implementation of many schemes and programmes. Substantial funds are already being transferred through Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission , National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, Drinking Water Mission , and Total Sanitation Campaign , among others. For PRis to perform the functions assigned to them effectively, they must be fiscally capable and autonomous. Funds must follow functions. The possible sources of Panchayat revenue include taxes, duties, fees and tolls, as well as grants-in-aid from the State. If local bodies are to perform their assigned functions effectively, they must be fiscally capable and autonomous. However, taxation powers at the GP level are entirely dependent on the discretion of the state. There is a significant mismatch between functional and financial capabilities of PRis in many States. The innovative idea of setting up state finance commissions to further augment financial resources of local bodies has also had problems in implementation.

Administrative Decentralization

Administration decentralization aims at transferring decision-making authority, resources and responsibilities for the delivery of select number of public services from the Central Government to other levels of government, agencies, field offices of Central Government line agencies. Administration decentralization is often simultaneous with civil service reform. There are two major forms of administrative decentralization: Deconcentration, Delegation.

Deconcentration refers to the transfer of authority and responsibility from one level of the Central Government to another while maintaining the same hierarchical level of accountability from the local units to the Central Governmnent ministry or agency, which has been decentralized. Deconcentration can be seen as the first step in a newly decentralizing government to improve service delivery. Delegation redistributes authority and responsibilities to local units of government and agencies that are not always necessarily branches or local offices of delegating authority. While some transfer of accountability to the sub-national level unity to which power is being delegated takes place, the bulk of accountability is still vertical and to the delegating central unit.

The District Planning Committees: At the district le vel, Article 243ZD in Part IX A of the Constitution provides for the Constitution of District Planning Committees (DPC) by the State Governments . The DPCs are required to "consolidate" the plans prepared by the Panchayats and Municipalities in the district, and, on this basis, to formulate a draft development plan for the district as a whole. Four-fifths ofDPC members are to be elected by and from among the elected representatives of the District Panchayat and the Municipalities in the district. Each DPC has the authority to take decisions regarding matters of common interest between the Panchayats and the Municipalities, including spatial planning, sharing of water and other physical and natural resources, as also the integrated development of infrastructure and environmental conservation in the districts concerned. There is no reservation for women in the DPCs.

Role of Bureaucracy: The accountability of government and its bureaucracy to the people has become virtually non-existent. Rule oflaw has been undermined in a centralise d, unaccountable poli ty. Over-centralization also meant that institutional self-correction is extremely dif ficult . Such a situation often leads to eruption of viole nce, volatile voting behaviour, and severe assaults on the unity and integrity of the nation. All these are witnessed in contemporary India. Bureaucracy is a body of permanent, paid and skilled officials. It aids and advises the government to make plans and carry them out. The role of bureaucracy has changed. It no longer performs only the regulatory functions but actively engages in development and welfare activities. Conventional image of civil servant has been that of an anonymous servant of the minister who is committed to efficient discharge of his duties and who offers his sincere advice to his master, irrespective of his political ideology. This advice may or may not be accepted by the minis ter, but once the decision is made, he is duty bound to implement it effectively . In the process of transferring of power to the local level democratic institutions there are bound to be conflicts of various kinds; most importantly between the democratic institutions and the bureaucracy. Hence, it is necessary to institutionalize the link between the two in order to facilitate harmonious functioning by formulating appropriate rules of business. There are alternative models where such a link has been attempted. In the case of Karnataka, the Collector is outside the system of elected local governments but the Chief Executive Officer of the Zila Parishad is a bureaucrat. In West Bengal, the Collector is the Member Secretary of the DPC with the chairman of the Zila Parishad as the chairman of the DPC. In Gujarat, both the Collector and the President of the District Panchayat are co-vice chairmen of the District Panchayat Board. In Madhya Pradesh one fifth of the Sarpanchas have been made members of the intermediate panchayat by rotation each year and all the Adhayakshas of the intermediate panchayats are representative in Zila Parishads. Each State would have to evolve its own administrative arrangements to make democratic decentralization functional on the ground. There would also be conflict between different political formations at the State and local level as also within a local area. These would have to be ironed out within the democratic political process itself. Moreover, a greater involvement of people in the running of institutions and services through PRIs would also have a positive impact on the quality of life of the local population.

Q. 8. What are the different requirements in development planning?

Ans. Requirements in Development Planning: Since the 1970s the Indian government has made poverty reduction a priority in its development planning. Policies have focused on improving the poor standard ofliving by ensuring food security, promoting self-employment through greater access to assets, increasing wage employment

and improving access to basic social services. Launched in 1965, India's Public Distribution System has helped meet people's basic food needs by providing rations at subsidized prices. Although it has affected less than 20% of the poor's food purchases, the system has been important in sustaining people's consumption of cereals, especially in periods of drought. It has provided women and girls with better access to food and helped overcome the widespread discrimination against female consumption within households. It has also reduced the burden of women, who are responsible for providing food for the household.

Issues in Rural Development: Rural Development in India is an important segment of economic development. Rural India is real India. Over 76 percent of the total population oflndia lives in villages. Rural India still contributes about half of the national income. Agriculture is the basic occupation which sustains the rural areas. Rural development is not simply an economic proposition; it has social, psychological and cultural dimensions as well. It is a multi-dimensional as well as multi-directional concept. To be precise , rural development is a programme designed to improve the socio-economic living conditions o the rural poor. It aims also at raising their cultural level and reorienting their rich traditions. It seeks to achieve increase rural production and productivity, greater socio-economic equity and a higher standard ofliving for the rural poor. It is partly ameliorative and partly development-oriented. Development is interlinked with motivation, innovation and the active participation of the beneficiaries, *inter alia,* this calls for organization and management. Rural development rcognises the importance of improved food supplies and nutrition, as well as the importance of such basic services as health, housing, education and expanded communications, which will go a long way in enhancing the productivity of the rural poor. Moreover, it aims at providing gainful employment, so that the rural people too may contribute their mite to the national product. Rural development implies a fuller development of existing resources , including the construction of infrastructure , such as roads and irrigation works, the introduction ofnew production technolo gy, the revival of traditional arts and crafts, and the creation ofnew types of institutions andorganizations.

Agriculture: The government has initiated , sustained , and refined many programmes since independence to help the poor attain self-sufficiency in food production. Probably the most important initiative has been the supply of basic commodities, particularly food at controlled prices, available throughout the country. The poor spend about 80 per cent of their income on food while the rest of the population spends more than 60 percent. The price of food is a major determinant of wage scales. Often when food prices rise sharply, rioting and looting follow. Until the late 1970s, the government frequently had difficulty obtaining adequate grain supplies in years of poor harvests. During those times, states with surpluses of grain were cordoned off to force partial sales to public agencies and to keep private traders from shipping grain to deficit areas to secure very high prices; State Governments in surplus-grain areas were often less than cooperative. After the late 1970s, the Central Government, by holding reserve stocks and importing grain adequately and early, maintained sufficient supplies to meet the increased demand during drought years. It also provided more remunerative prices to farmers.

Employment Generation: In rural areas, the government has undertaken programmes to mitigate the worst effects of adverse monsoon rainfall, which affects not *only* farmers but village artisans and traders when the price of grain rises. The government has supplied water by financing well digging and, since the early 1980s, by power-assisted well drilling; rescinded land taxes for drought areas; tried to maintain stable food prices; and provided food

through a food-for-work programme. The actual work accomplished through food-for-work programmes is often a secondary conside ration, but useful projects sometimes result. Employment is offered at a low daily wage, usually paid in grain, the rationale being that only the truly needy will take jobs at such low pay.

Human Resource Development: In our search for greater efficiency for setting and pursuing developmental goals, training of manpower becomes an important working tool. In the context of decentralized planning in particular, a well conceived capacitation programme assumes greater significance. There are certain subject areas: concepts, methods and techniques, institutional framework, general planning procedures, basic exercises and case studies, which may be deemed as the essential knowledge and skills that have to be disseminated catering to the target groups. To increase the production of goods and services the producers have to adopt new technology.

Rural Credit: A major change occurred after 1969 when India adopted social banking and multiagency approach to adequately meet the needs of rural credit. Later, the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NBARD) was set-up in 1982 as an apex body to coordinate the activities of all institutions involved in the rural financing system. The Green Revolution was a harbinger of major changes in the credit system as it led to the diversificationof the portfolio of rural credit towards production-oriented lending.

The largest credit-based governmnent poverty reduction programme in the world, the Integrated Rural Development Programme provides rural households below the poverty line with credit to purchase income-generating assets. Launched in 1979, the programme has supplied subsidized credit to such groups as small and marginalized farmers, agricultural labourers, rural artisans, the physically handicapped , Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Within this target population, 40% of the beneficiaries are supposed to be women. Although the programme has reached 51 million families , only 27% of the borrowers have been women . The programme has significantly increased the income of 57% of assisted families.

Public Administration: It is now realised that no planning process could hope to succeed purely on bureaucratic lines . It is essential to associate the people with the planning process at all levels. Even though there are problems never the less there is very little doubt that the planning process must be sustained by the fullest possible participation of the people. Public participation in planning depends upon several conditions. Firstaly of all, the people should be aware of the functioning of the process. In other words information is essential if people are to participate. *Secondly,* there must be a machinery which enables people to participate meaningfully in the planning process. *Thirdly,* people must feel that their participation is not a formality but that they have the ability to influence the functioning of the process. These three conditions can be met only when there is a reasonable degree of decentralization of the planning process, it is most unlikely that people will participate.

Issues in Urban Planning: Urban Planning is a discipline which syntheses inputs from various disciplines into an integrated plan of action for integrating and shaping the natural and built enviromnent to achieve a desirable quality oflife in urban areas, keeping in view resource constraints. Urban Planning can be defined as the design and regulation of the uses of space that focus on the physical form, economic functions, and social impacts of the urban environment and on the location of different activities within it. The heavy shifts of population are the result of the lack of adequate employment opportunities in the villages and the attraction of relatively high wages and amenities in the towns. Unemployment and particularly underemployment in agriculture stimulates this tendency. In the federal

structure of the Indian polity, the matters pertaining to the housing and urban development have been assigned by the Constitution of India to the State Governments. The Constitution (74th Amendment) Act have further delegated many of these functions to the urban local bodies. The constitutional and legal authority of the Government oflndia is limited only to Delhi and other Union Territories and to the subject which State Legislatures authorise the Union Parliament to legislate. However, the provisions of the Constitution notwithstanding, the Government of India plays a much more important role and exercise a larger influence to shape the policies and programmes of the country as a whole. The national policy issues are decided by the Government oflndia which also allocates resources to the State Governments through various centrally sponsored schemes, provides finances through national financial institutions and supports various external assistance programmes for housing and urban development in the country as a whole. Policies and programme contents are decided at the time of formulation of Five Year Plans. The indirect effect of the fiscal, economic and industrial location decisions of the Government oflndia exercise a far more dominant influence on the pattern of urbanization and real estate investment in the country. The goal ofany Perspective Plan is to guide towards achievement ofa better quality of human life for the urban population as well as the population residing in adjoining hinterland subject to resource constraints. Quality of human life is a derivative of several complex functions, therefore, a set of desired objectives need to be formulated for accomplishment of the broad goal. Urban Development Strategies already outlined in the 10th Plan stresses on improved quality oflife in urban areas with particular focus on the poor and other under-privileged section of the population. It also stresses towards meeting these ends within an environmentally sustainable framework. This planning initiative will endeavour to provide a sustainable and operational framework for suitable strategies, policies, and priorities for resource planning to achieve the desired objective of socio-economic and physical development of the people through enhancement of quality of life by providing equal access to improved social and physical infrastructure and proper planning and management of the development process by ensuring proper conservation of environment heritage and culture.

Environmental Protection: As per 12th Schedule (Article 243 W) Clause 8 of the Constitution oflndia, it is mandatory for all Municipal Corporations to protect the environment and promotion of ecological aspects. Thus, as a regulatory and controlling authority for the development of the cities, the municipal corporations have to play major role in this scenario. India's goal is the protection of India's ecological security through the following broad programme objectives:

- Ensuring conservation of the country's bio-diversity, major eco-systems and critical landscapes.
- Minimising wasteful consumption and promotion of sustainable and wise use of natural resources by all sectors of society.
- Promoting the active involvement of rural and traditional communities in the sustainable management and conservation of natural resources.
- Working towards reduction in the sources and impacts of climate change.
- Minimising pollution, reducing the use of toxic chemicals and ensuring improved management of toxic waste.
- Enhancing active participation of all sections of society in nature conservation and environmental protection through environmental education, awareness raising and capacity building.
- Ensuring that environmental principles are integrated into development planning, policy and practices.
- Promoting environmental governance through legiglation, policy and advocacy.

In India, the promotion of environmental quality and management began with the Fourth Five Year Plan in 1969. The Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act (1974) and Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act (1981) were meant to restore and maintain the environment. The Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) and the State pollution control boards were established by these acts to implement their provisions. Spurred by declining environmental quaI ity and the Bhopal gas disaster, the Environment (Protection) Act, (1986) was enacted to empower the Central Government to take necessary measures to preserve and improve the environment. Subsequently, the 1948 Factories' Act was amended with a new chapter on regulating hazardous industrial processes. Amendments were made to the Air Act and Water Act which further empowered environmental agencies and strengthened penal provisions. A host of legislative, administrative and judicial initiatives have since been launched to protect the environment. Despite the progress made under the Command and Control Regulations , the environment is rapidly degrading. A recent World Bank Study estimates that environmental damage in India amounts to US$ 9.7 billion (Rs. 34 million crore) per year or 4.5 percent ofl ndia's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The 1995 Economic Survey indicates that 90 per cent of water in 241 large cities is polluted. Moreover, 54 per cent of the urban and 97 per cent of the rural population has no sanitation facilities.

Disaster Management: Five Year Plan documents have, historically, not included consideration of issues relating to the management and mitigation of natural disasters. The traditional perception has been limited to the idea of "Calamity relief', which is seen essentially as a non-plan item of expenditure. However, the impact of major disasters cannot be mitigated by the provision of immediate relief alo ne, which is the primary focus of calamity relief efforts. Disasters can have devastating effects on the economy; they cause huge human and economic losses , and can significantly set-back development efforts of a region or a State. Two recent disasters, the Orissa Cyclone and the Gujarat Earthquake, are cases in point. With the kind of economic losses and developmental setbacks that the country has been suffering year after year, the development process needs to be sensitive towards disaster prevention and mitigation aspects. There is thus need to look at disasters from a development perspective as well Further, although disaster management is not generally associated with plan financin g, there are in fact a number of plan schemes in operation, such as for drought proofing, afforestation, drinking water, etc., which deal with the prevention and mitigation of the impact of natural disasters. External assistance for post-disaster reconstruction and streamlining of management structures also is a part of the Plan. A specific, centrally sponsored scheme on disaster management also exists. The plan thus already has a defined role in dealing with the subject.